

# Narcissism in Art & Literature

This Page contains information on the myth of Narcissus, as well as three works of art: Salvador Dali's *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, Caravaggio's *Narcissus*, and John William Waterhouse's *Echo and Narcissus*. In addition, two Robert Browning poems, "My Last Duchess" and "Porphyria's Lover" and the Johnny Cash song "Delia's Gone" are posted.

## 1. Art

[Wikipedia page: Narcissus \(mythology\).pdf](#) 

[Website: The Myth of Narcissus.pdf](#) 

[Website article: Analysis of Salvador Dali's \*The Metamorphosis of Narcissus\*.pdf](#) 

[Wikipedia page: \*The Metamorphosis of Narcissus\* by Salvador Dali.pdf](#) 

[Video: Smart History: Analysis of Salvador Dali's \*The Metamorphosis of Narcissus\* \(Links to an](#)



[external site.\)](#)

[Wikipedia page: \*Narcissus\* by Caravaggio.pdf](#) 

[Video: Smart History: Analysis of Caravaggio's \*Narcissus\* \(Links to an external site.\)](#)



[Wikipedia page: \*Echo and Narcissus\* by John William Waterhouse.pdf](#) 

## 2. Literature

[Text & Audio of Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

[Text: Robert Browning's "Porphyria's Lover".pdf](#) 

Video: Johnny Cash's "Delia's Gone"

[Text: Lyrics to "Delia's Gone".pdf](#) 

After reviewing this material, click Next to see your Art Analysis response assignment.

## Response to: Narcissism in Art

After reading through the Narcissism resources on the previous page, write 300+ words comparing Salvador Dali's *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, John William Waterhouse's *Echo and Narcissus*, and Caravaggio's *Narcissus*. Do the artists portray the title character differently? Similarly? Do the artists seem to sympathize or identify with the title character? Do they portray them favorably? Neutrally? Is the work confusing? Ugly? Discuss.

This should be in the form of a Body paragraph(s) that includes a Topic Sentence, examples, and a concluding sentence.

After completing this assignment, click Next to see your Literature response assignment.

## Response to: Narcissism in Literature

**Read through the following Narcissistic Personality Diagnostic Criteria and explain which criteria are met by the duke ("My Last Duchess"), Porphyria's lover, or the speaker in "Delia's Gone." You do not have to discuss all three works in your response.**

Response should be 300+ words and include specific examples from the poem(s)/song. This can include quotes from the poem/lyrics.

## Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder and the severity of symptoms vary. People with the disorder can:

- Have an exaggerated sense of self-importance
- Have a sense of entitlement and require constant, excessive admiration
- Expect to be recognized as superior even without achievements that warrant it

- Exaggerate achievements and talents
- Be preoccupied with fantasies about success, power, brilliance, beauty or the perfect mate
- Believe they are superior and can only associate with equally special people
- Monopolize conversations and belittle or look down on people they perceive as inferior
- Expect special favors and unquestioning compliance with their expectations
- Take advantage of others to get what they want
- Have an inability or unwillingness to recognize the needs and feelings of others
- Be envious of others and believe others envy them
- Behave in an arrogant or haughty manner, coming across as conceited, boastful and pretentious
- Insist on having the best of everything — for instance, the best car or office

At the same time, people with narcissistic personality disorder have trouble handling anything they perceive as criticism, and they can:

- Become impatient or angry when they don't receive special treatment
- Have significant interpersonal problems and easily feel slighted
- React with rage or contempt and try to belittle the other person to make themselves appear superior
- Have difficulty regulating emotions and behavior
- Experience major problems dealing with stress and adapting to change
- Feel depressed and moody because they fall short of perfection
- Have secret feelings of insecurity, shame, vulnerability and humiliation

Source: <http://allpsych.com/disorders/personality/index.html>